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Conch shells (*ndavui*) were kept in the sacred caves. When propitiated by the priest the god entered the shells. They were then blown by the priest and the blast was considered to be the voice of the god. Moto says that when he was a young man, the land people on Kambara went with the priest to a sacred cave during a drought. After they performed a kava ceremony outside the cave the priest entered and prayed. When he blew the conch shell in the cave the people know he had contacted the god.

Offerings were formerly presented at a sacred stone called Kalou, found in the hamlet site of Toka, southwest of Naivindamu on the shore of the Fulanga lagoon. It consists of an almost cylindrical block of unworked limestone, about 60 cm. high and with a diameter of 35 cm., set on a pile of stone about 30 cm. high. The natives of Naivindamu say the stone contains mana.

Near the site of Onemata on Kambara lies a block of limestone which projects about one meter out of the ground. Here the natives say a man, who is now an ancestor god, entered the stone. The place is sacred.

## ANCESTOR WORSHIP

The ancestor cult was introduced into Lau by the group of immigrants who founded the chiefs' phratry. It has become the keynote of Lauan religion. The pattern of ranked clans of the upper class was reflected in a celestial hierarchy of ancestral gods. Ndengei, the snake god of Viti Levu, was the most powerful forefather, because he was the originator of the group. Then came the forefather gods of each noble clan in order of rank which was originally determined by success in warfare. The ancestor gods were war gods, the ghosts of famous warriors. They were propitiated to gain mana for enhancing social prestige, and their eventual rank in the celestial hierarchy depended upon their mana-bestowing powers as reflected in the successes and failures of their clans.

The concept of mana associated with the ancestor cult is strong in the native pattern of thought. According to this concept mana is the vital force or potency which gives superhuman significance to persons or things: to human beings, animals, plants or inanimate objects. Its presence in a person or thing is not attributed to power inherent in the thing itself but to some spiritual force lodging in it. The spiritual force is frequently one of the beings who peopled the superhuman world of the Lauans before the advent of Christianity. The most powerful of these beings were the ancestor gods.

The first-born of each noble clan was the temporary repository of the mana of the clan's ancestral forefathers. The chiefs had the strongest forefathers and the high chief was most sacred because theoretically he received mana from the most powerful ancestor gods.

The ancestor gods of each noble clan were incarnated in from one to three

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769 778 618 species of natural phenomena, that is trees, fish, and birds. At least half of the clans studied claimed possession of three species: a species of fish, bird, and tree. The remainder of the clans claimed one or two species, or said they had forgotten their species. Each species was regarded as clan property, sacred to the owners and respected by members of other clans. The natives believed that the soul (*yalo*) of the clan ancestor god appeared in the form of a specific fish or bird of the species owned by the clan. Therefore members [262] of the clan must not harm a member of the clan species. Informants agree that eating one would be like eating one of themselves and would cause the person doing so to become ill and die. They must propitiate the incarnation with offerings of food and kava. It is difficult to obtain information concerning clan animals and plants because many customs concerning them are no [552] longer strictly observed. Moreover, there is a tabu on their names. The generic name of the species belonging to a clan may not be uttered by members of another clan in the presence of the owners. Formerly if a member of another clan mentioned the names of a clan's incarnations in the presence of the owners he was eaten by them. However, each clan species has a title which is not tabu.

The main forefather of the Vuanikathu clan on Kambara was Lekutu Levu (Big Bush), a war god, formerly worshipped by the clan priest in the temple called Nai Langa Mbakola. He was propitiated with human sacrifices in the form of *mbakola* (human bodies to be eaten), with kava and first fruits. Lekutu Levu was consulted by the priest before a clan raid. The Vuanikathu [726 539] warriors, when threatening to attack a village, would sing:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sa vura ko Lekutu Levu! | The people of Lekutu Levu are coming! |
| Toko luvemu! | Hide your children! |
| Toko luvemu! | Hide your children! |

The god of the Vuanikathu clan was incarnated in the *mavinda* (*Erythrospermum polyandrum*) tree, the barracuda (*ongo*), and the *kaisevou* (a yellow-breasted bird). On Kambara the *mavinda* tree grows only at Longa Mavinda in the bush behind Naikeleanga on land belonging to the Vuanikathu clan. Vuanikathu keeps the land clear under the trees. The *mavinda* does not bear edible fruit but its fragrant flowers may not be picked or worn in wreaths. Even today a member of Vuanikathu may not catch or eat a barracuda. The clan members formerly prayed to the barracuda, not in the god house, but in the dwelling house. *Kaisevou* birds are caught by clan members, rubbed with a piece of barkcloth soaked in perfumed coconut oil and then released. The bird does not nest on Kambara today, but it occasionally comes from the neighboring island of Wangava, where it is common.

The forefather of Mbutonikoro clan of the chiefs' group on Mothe, according to the clan headman, was Ului Lakemba who came to the island six

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generations ago and founded the clan. The main gods of the clan, however, were those of the Vatuwangga clan at Lakemba from whom Ului Lakemba was descended (p. 38; table 2). The gods of Mbutonikoro were incarnated in the *thau* tree, the *kanathe* fish, and the *tchilio* bird. The slogan of the clan was "Kana kana kalou" (*kana*, food; *kalou*, god).

The chief priest on Mothe belonged to the Kamali clan. The foundation of the principal god house, located on the old Kamali hamlet site in west Mothe, may still be seen. It is surrounded by sweet smelling plants. It is still regarded as a sacred place, and as they approach it the Mothe people become silent and remove their turbans and ornaments. The god of Kamali was incarnated in the scaled shark (*nggio thave*), the *vivili*, and the *matamila* fish which were tabu to Kamali. Members of the clan think that the *kaisevou* bird, which is common on Mothe, used to be tabu also. The principal forefather of Kamali is not known but the clan genealogy is traced seven generations back to the priest Mirakilangi. Other priests in the clan pedigree are Malanamailangi, Wanggathiri, Ndolosambau, and Mbatchimalungu.

The main forefather of the Vunikoro clan on Fulanga was called Rokoratu. He built the fortified village of Unduundu. He was worshipped at Mbure Kalou Levu (The Great Temple), called also Mbure ni Kalou Rokoratu, which was located at the old fortress of Unduundu on the hill behind Muanaithake. He was incarnated in the *ulumburu* fish and the *sewa matua* fish which were formerly tabu to Vunikoro.

The chiefs' group believed that toward the west or northwest lay not only the land of their origin but also the abode of the dead (p. 118).

I have concluded from the above that in contrast with the land group the chief group did not possess true totems. They did, however, possess clan ancestor gods which were incarnated in species of natural phenomena.

## THE PRIESTHOOD

A hereditary priesthood is associated with ancestor worship in Lau. It was apparently also introduced by the chiefs' group.

Informants say that in the old days the priests outranked the chiefs. According to tales this was so at the time of the Ndaunisai migration. The following tale, common in Lau, records the division of power between the priests and chiefs:

Nggileso, the chief priest, had two sons, Nggoma and Ndelaivungalei. Nggoma succeeded Nggileso and sent Ndelaivungalei to Naiau for mats to use in the god house. Ndelaivungalei secured the mats but he remained on Naiau and became chief. He had a son named Niumataiwalu and a daughter. Nggoma had two sons. When they reached maturity they were sent to their uncle on Naiau for mats. Nggoma's sons disliked Ndelaivungalei and on the way to Naiau they planned to kill him. They were received at Naiau, and the chief of Naiau asked them for ingredients for a pudding to eat at

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769 793 539 a feast to mark his daughter's nubility. They killed him and his daughter. At this time Niumataiwalu was at Vuna, not on Naiau. The chief of Vuna asked Niumataiwalu to carry a message to Mbau by canoe. He went to Mbau but did not go ashore with the message. At this time Andi ni Levuka, wife of the chief of Mbau, became pregnant by Niumataiwalu. She begged the chief to be allowed to go to Nairai in order to superintend the making of coconut oil. She landed in Nairai and Niumataiwalu proceeded in his canoe to Totoya, where he heard about the murder of his father and sister. The sons of Nggoma had returned to Lakemba. Niumataiwalu immediately returned to Naiau and became successor to his father. For revenge he went to Navutoka. He was met by his cousins. They fell upon each other and Nggoma and his family were killed. Now Niumataiwalu was by power and birth the successor to Nggoma, but he did not take the title of priest. He was the first *sau*, the chief of Lakemba, and the chief of Naiau.

(For a variant of this tale see Hennings, 12, pp. 33-37.)

769 793 After the coming of the chiefs' phratry, control was divided between the priests and the chiefs. Each ranking island had a principal priest clan. The title of the priest (*mbete*) descended by primogeniture from father to eldest son in the first-born line of the priest clan. The priests were the seers who directed the spiritual affairs of the group, while the chiefs were the war leaders. After the Tongan conquest and the introduction of Christianity, the power of the chiefs increased and the title of priest became honorary. First fruits were presented to the chief instead of to the priest. The priest of Mothe, who is the headman of Kamali clan, installs the chief of Mothe today. However, on Kambara and on Fulanga, the only islands visited besides Mothe where the island chief presides over more than one village, the chief is installed by the herald.

The priest had charge of the worship of a clan's ancestor gods (*kalou vu*). He was the intermediary for the people and the god. Since he was influential in securing mana from the god, he was feared and respected. He controlled the activities of the people in warfare, in times of famine, and in sickness, receiving offerings from the people and presenting them to the god according to the *sevusevu* ceremonial pattern (pp. 65-66).

[782] Offerings were made by the people to obtain mana which would insure the success of clan activities and avoid trouble. The principal offerings were first fruits, kava, and cooked feasts, including human sacrifices. As a small offering wreaths were presented.

The priest prayed to the god, who presently took possession of him and spoke through him or revealed his will to him by means of a sign or omen. According to Fison, (8, pp. 166-167), when a priest was possessed his whole body shook in convulsions and his flesh twitched. After the ceremony the priest and his clan consumed the sacred offerings.

## THE GOD HOUSE

Each priest had charge of a god house (*mbure kalou*), a sanctuary where the ancestor god was worshipped. It was a hut built on a high mound flanked

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with limestone or basalt. Each clan had a god house. According to Moto of Undu, the ground plan of the mound as well as the building of the god house belonging to Matasoata clan was oval in shape and about one fathom wide. A curved wall plate (*i lolo*) was not made of joined sections (as in the modern Tongan dwelling house, p. 165), but of several bowed rods (as in the *vale lolova kathukathu*, p. 171). The roof was gabled. God house sites at Lomatchi gardens on Kambara and at Kamali on Mothe also show oval foundation mounds. Outside the god house grew sweet smelling plants which informants say facilitated spiritual contacts and meditation. Fragrance is frequently used for this purpose in Lau, especially in the form of a wreath or powdered sandalwood.

A temple frequently contained one or more ceremonial clubs, which were slightly smaller and shorter than an ordinary throwing club (*i kolo*) and were elaborately decorated with incised carving accentuated with lime. The ancestor god entered the ceremonial clubs, making them sacred. Other weapons belonging to the clan were kept in the clan temple. The weapons of each clan had a title. Those of Matasoata were called Toa Kula, those of Tonganiuthi, Iri Mbuli. Before a raid the priest prayed over the clan weapons and, if the god was willing, his mana entered them and the clan was victorious. If the god did not enter the weapons the people were defeated because the god of the enemy was stronger.

God houses as well as sacred caves (pp. 108-109) and natural objects such as stones or trees in which the god dwelt were called *na sava* (meaning the sacred or purified).

## PURIFICATION

Everything directly connected with the gods was sacred, pure, and free from the profane. Everything which was directly connected with women's loss of blood—the menses, first intercourse, pregnancy, and birth—was profane and impure. Sickness and circumcision were profane.

Ritual purification was necessary in Lau before contact with the sacred and after contact with the profane. Purification was accomplished by means of water or smoke. The usual purification pattern was the four-day tabu, lifted by a bath (*i silisili*) in the sea. Moto said that formerly it was observed after killing in war (*veivaluvaluti*) and after murder in peace time (*veivakamatei*). The priest, the only human being possessed by the god, purified himself before approaching the god by a ritual bath in the temple. One tale relates how the priest of Tonganiuthi clan was killed by his own people while bathing because he had been angry when the people failed to bring the first fruits to the god house. Warriors prepared themselves to carry the sacred weapons by abstinence from sexual intercourse for four nights immediately before the raid. Women still bathe in the sea according to the old pattern

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after first intercourse at marriage, at the pregnancy ceremony, and after childbirth; boys do so after circumcision; and both sexes do so after an illness. Smoke is used to protect a turtle net against the pernicious influence of the glance or touch of a pregnant or a menstruating woman.

## THE DOUBLE SOUL

The superhuman world of the Lauan is peopled not only by spirits and ancestor ghosts but also by the disembodied souls of the living. These disembodied souls are still just as real to them as humans. They appear at any time of day or night, frequently in human form, but also in the form of animals, fish, or birds. Some are friendly and aid them in life, others are hostile and greatly feared.

Each human being has two souls, a good soul (*yalo vinaka*) and a bad soul (*yalo tha*). The bad soul occasionally leaves the body of a living being, who remains unaware of its absence, and wanders about playing tricks on unsuspecting human victims. Such a bad soul appears in the physical form of the human being to whom it belongs, and can be identified only by its ability to vanish. The victim mistakes the bad soul for its owner and is lured into danger or death. For instance, Ndakai was walking down a rocky path on Kambara. He met a man and began to talk to him. Ndakai fell and broke his leg. He looked around but the man had vanished, so Ndakai knew that he had been talking to the man's bad soul, which had caused him to slip.

Illness is often due to the absence of the good soul. If it returns the patient recovers, otherwise he dies (23, p. 128). When a person dies his good soul goes to Nai Thimbathimba where it starts on the journey to the abode of the dead (pp. 114-115). His bad soul frequently remains, at least for a short time, near his home on earth and frightens human being.

## ABODE OF THE DEAD

There are conflicting beliefs concerning the destiny and abode of the soul (*yalo*) after death. The dominant belief, introduced by the chiefs' group, is that when a man dies his soul goes to Nai Thimbathimba, a "jumping-off" place found on or near each island, usually facing the west or northwest. From here the soul goes to Nai Thombothombo, the land of souls, (*vanua ni yalo*) located on the Mbua coast, Vanua Levu (fig. 1). The natives say that a person near Nai Thombothombo cannot sleep or hear his own voice because of the noise.

Nai Thimbathimba of the Kambara and Wangava people is a high rock located on the west point of Wangava (fig. 2, 17). There the souls call for a wave which transports them to Nai Thombothombo.

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dark stormy night when, having sailed by canoe from Mothe 577
to the horseshoe-shaped island of Fulanga, we were trying to find Naivindamu village on the shore of the central lagoon. As we sailed blindly about in wind and rain we barely missed one of the mushroom-shaped coral islets which dot the lagoon. One of the three sailors regularly blew a conch shell, the Lauan [201]
signal of distress, but there was no response. He had a slight hope that the natives, upon hearing it, would build a signal fire, he said. Finally he cried: *"Rarama!"* (light). After some minutes I discerned a faint glow ahead, which the boys said was from one of the village kitchen fires. It grew brighter as we approached. In a few minutes the canoe was beached and we were surrounded by faces peering through the darkness and by cries of *"Papalangi!"* (the native word for foreigner or European). They had heard the conch blasts, they said, but the night was too wet and stormy to leave their kitchen fires.

The typical response to treatment by modern medicine also 156
reflects the native psychological set. Upon request I once 757
treated a young Tokalau girl who had received a deep leg wound from a large fish. After the girl had recovered, her father came to me frequently with requests for tobacco, kava, etc. According to native ideology, I owed him a debt for having been allowed to cure the girl, because he could not conceive of my treating her if I had not believed it was somehow to my advantage.

In order to understand the native outlook on life today let 769 ●
us review briefly what is known of the old Lauan religion. 797
Before the introduction of Christianity, the most important superhuman beings in Lau were the ancestor gods, probably introduced into Lau by the Polynesian immigrants who came from Viti Levu. The most powerful ancestors of noble clans were eventually deified after death. When the missionaries landed in Lau the ancestor cult was not only the key to the native religion but also the basis of the social and economic life.

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769 It reinforced the desire for prestige, based on rank, success in 797 warfare and wealth, which gave the culture its definite secular bias. These ancestor gods are still feared by many old Lauans today.

769 The ancestor gods were worshipped in temples—small 346 thatched huts with disproportionately high gabled roofs and 778 oval shaped ground plan. The temples were elevated on stone- 793 flanked mounds surrounded by fragrant plants, for fragrance was associated with sacredness in the minds of the natives. In them were kept sacred objects belonging to the clan, such as elaborately carved ceremonial clubs. A hereditary priest officiated at each temple. He propitiated the gods with offerings such as food, kava, whales' teeth, and human sacrifices, especially the bodies of enemies captured in warfare. All that remain today of these temples are the stone-flanked mounds on which offerings are occasionally made secretly.

776 Most of the gods of the upper class were war gods. Before 726 a raid the priest consulted the war gods regarding the auspici- 793 ousness of an attack, and prayed that "mana" be granted the clan warriors and their weapons. Without the approval of the gods the raid would not be successful. If the god responded, the priest's body began to twitch and shake. As the god entered his body the priest writhed in grotesque contortions. He was bathed in sweat. The movements became more and more violent until finally in a queer shrill voice the god spoke through the priest.

787 Williams gives the following account of this spirit possession. 793 "One who intends to consult the oracle dresses and oils himself and, accompanied by a few others, goes to the priest . . . When the party enters, he (the priest) rises, and sits so that his back is near to the white cloth by which the god visits him, while the others occupy the opposite side of the *mbure* (temple). The principal person presents a whale's tooth, states the purpose of the visit, and expresses a hope that the god will regard him with favor. Sometimes there is placed

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before the priest a dish of scented oil, with which he anoints himself, and then receives the tooth, regarding it with deep and serious attention. Unbroken silence follows. The priest becomes absorbed in thought, and all eyes watch him with unblinking steadiness. In a few minutes he trembles; slight distortions are seen in his face, and twitching movements in his limbs. These increase to a violent muscular action, which spreads until the whole frame is strongly convulsed, and the man shivers as with a strong ague fit. In some instances this is accompanied with murmurs and sobs, and veins are greatly enlarged, and the circulation of the blood quickened. The priest is now possessed by his god, and all his words and actions are considered as no longer his own, but those of the deity who has entered into him. Shrill cries of *'Koi au! Koi au!'* (It is I! It is I!) fill the air, and the god is supposed thus to notify his approach. While giving the answer the priest's eyes stand out and roll as in a frenzy; his voice is unnatural, his face pale, his lips livid, his breathing depressed, and his entire appearance like that of a furious madman. The sweat runs from every pore, and tears start from his strained eyes; after which the symptoms gradually disappear . . ."[47]

The success of the clan in warfare, its strength, man power, and wealth were derived from the "mana" of its ancestral gods. This clan "mana" was concentrated in the clan "old head" (that is, the first born direct male descendant of the first son of the founder). The high chief of Lau has the most "mana" of any living person. Theoretically the direct descendant of the highest ancestral god, he is considered to be the most sacred living being.

The ancestral gods formed a sort of celestial hierarchy which was reflected in the system of ranked clans in Lauan society. Ndengei (pronounced En-deng-ē'), the great snake god of Viti Levu and mythical originator of the upper class in Lau, stood at the top of the set-up. Tradition says that many generations

[47] Williams and Calvert, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 224-225.

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769 776 618 ago, Ndengei, who was then a man, and his companions landed at Vunda on the west coast of Viti Levu after a long sea voyage. The group moved along the coast and finally settled on the Nakauvandra range in the northern interior. From here the descendants of Ndengei moved into most of eastern Fiji. The migration into southern Lau was led by Ndaunisai (pronounced En-daú-ni-sai), a descendant of Ndengei. Ndaunisai founded the upper class in Lau, and today he ranks next to Ndengei among the heavenly hosts. Then come other forefathers of the noble class according to rank.

769 618 The ancestral gods of each clan were incarnated in a species of tree, a species of fish, and a species of bird. It was tabu for clan members to eat or harm them and this tabu is upheld by some Lauans today. There is no evidence that the gods in Lau were represented by carved wooden or stone images.

565 769 618 776 The lower class in Lau participated in the outer form of the ancestor cult but never accepted its inner content. Although each clan had its gods, temples, and priests, the clan gods of the lower class apparently consisted of spirits who had never lived on earth, rather than ghosts of departed ancestors, and they did not appear in the celestial hierarchy of gods. Just as the commoners maintained their clan divisions, so they retained also their clan deities in spite of the influence of the nobles.

565 773 The commoners of each island formerly believed in their local origin from some natural phenomenon such as a tree or an animal which was a totem. There are no other stories of their origin and no migration tales concerning them. The lower class of Kambara, for example, believed in its local [824] origin from a *ngingia* (pronounced ngi-ngí-a) tree (*Suriana maritima*) located near the beach north of Undu. The tree is still sacred to the commoners. In times of trouble, offerings of kava and food are still made at the base of this tree, which is kept free of underbrush. The red shark is the incarnation of the god of the Kambara commoners. It is the guardian of the lower class of Kambara, and no commoner even today